

## Writing Workshop

INFORMATIVE TEXT

# Online Feature Article

In this unit, you discovered the events, figures, and literature of the Civil War. The World Wide Web is home to discussions about this era and about the significant issues of today. Now, you will write about one legacy of your era in an **online feature article**—an informative piece of writing on a topic or trend.



Complete the workshop activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

### WRITE WITH A PURPOSE

#### WRITING TASK

Inform your audience by writing an **online feature article** that answers this research question: What is one topic, trend, person, or phenomenon that has defined *your* time? Choose a topic that people will still read and talk about 100 years from now.

#### Idea Starters

- a ground-breaking technology
- an important figure, such as an inventor or human-rights crusader
- an event, such as a presidential election, a war, or a terrorist attack
- a social or environmental issue

#### THE ESSENTIALS

Here are some common purposes, audiences, and formats for online feature articles and other informative/explanatory writings.

PURPOSES	AUDIENCES	FORMATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to inform readers about a topic</li><li>• to help readers gain a unique perspective on the topic</li><li>• to develop and maintain an online readership</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• classmates and teacher</li><li>• friends and family on a social networking site</li><li>• Web users with similar interests</li><li>• community members</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• magazine article</li><li>• wiki article</li><li>• news report</li><li>• blog posting</li><li>• podcast</li><li>• video blog</li></ul>

### COMMON CORE TRAITS

#### 1. DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS

- provides an engaging **introduction** with a clear **controlling idea**
- develops the topic and supports it with **evidence**, such as **facts**, **extended definitions**, **concrete details**, and **quotations**
- provides a **concluding section** that supports the information

#### 2. ORGANIZATION OF IDEAS

- logically **organizes** complex ideas, concepts, and information to **create a unified whole**
- uses appropriate and varied **transitions** and **syntax** to create cohesion and connect ideas
- includes **formatting**, **links**, **graphics**, and **multimedia**

#### 3. LANGUAGE FACILITY AND CONVENTIONS

- uses **precise language**, **domain-specific vocabulary**, and **literary techniques**
- establishes and maintains a **formal style** and **objective tone**
- employs correct **grammar**, **mechanics**, and **spelling**

Writing Online



Go to [thinkcentral.com](http://thinkcentral.com).  
KEYWORD: HML11N-620

# Planning/Prewriting



**W 2a–f** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex information. **W 6** Use technology to produce and publish individual writing products. **W 7** Conduct short research projects to answer a question.

## Getting Started

### CHOOSE A TOPIC

Use the Idea Starters on the previous page to brainstorm several topics that interest you and will likely interest your audience. Come up with at least three ideas for a topic, and then do a preliminary search online for each one. Choose a topic that has ample available information, but isn't so broad that you can't write a short article on it. Be sure to frame your topic in the form of a specific, tightly focused **research question** to help guide your research and writing.

### TIPS FOR GENERATING TOPIC IDEAS:

- Review national and international news sources for interesting current events.
- Visit community Web sites for popular topics of conversation.
- Read blogs or wikis that your teachers or classmates recommend, especially ones that your peers contribute to.
- Consider major events that have affected your life.

### THINK ABOUT AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

As you prepare to write your article, consider your **audience** and **purpose**. Understanding your audience will help you know what information to include and what **voice** and **style** to use while writing. Knowing your audience and purpose will also help you decide where to publish your online article.

### ASK YOURSELF:

- What **background information** do I need to include? For example, are there **domain-specific vocabulary terms** that I should explain or define?
- What aspects of this topic might my audience wish to learn more about?
- Where will I publish, or post, my article?

### FIND MULTIPLE AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES

Look for reputable sources in your school and local libraries and on the Web. Determine the strengths and limitations of each source by considering whether it is appropriate for your **audience** and **purpose**.

Choose authoritative online sources by looking for sites that are developed by experts in their field and that include information that can be verified by other sources. Find articles from official news sources, such as magazines and newspapers, or educational publications. Make sure you don't rely too heavily on just one source.

Record the title, author, and page number or Web address for each source. Remember, it's your responsibility to avoid plagiarism.

See **pages 1344–1351** for more information on locating and evaluating potential sources.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Sources	Notes
<a href="http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/results/president/">www.cnn.com/ ELECTION/2008/ results/president/</a>	results of 2008 election for U.S. president
Book: <u>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</u>	Frederick Douglass's autobiography
<a href="http://www.biography.com/articles/Barack-Obama-12782369">www.biography.com/ articles/Barack- Obama-12782369</a>	comprehensive biography of Barack Obama

# Planning/Prewriting *continued*

## Getting Started

### COLLECT AND SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION

While researching your topic, keep a record of **relevant quotations, facts, details, examples, and multimedia** that you come across. As you take notes, look for opportunities to **synthesize** information—to make connections and combine facts in a way that provides a broader understanding of the subject. Use a variety of reputable sources and your own previous knowledge to draw original conclusions about your topic.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

<i>"From the first I saw no chance of bettering the condition of the freedman until he should ... become a citizen."</i> —Frederick Douglass, 1892	<i>"One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination."</i> —Martin Luther King Jr., 1963
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*For over a century, influential African Americans fought for equality under the law in addition to freedom from slavery.*

### DRAFT A CONTROLLING IDEA

Craft a **controlling idea**, or thesis statement. Your research question can serve as the basis for your controlling idea, which should precisely identify what you want your audience to learn about your topic. Modify or refine your controlling idea as you draft.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

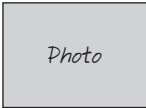

*The years of struggle by past African-American leaders created the foundation for the historic election of the first African-American president of the United States.*

### GENERATE A STORYBOARD

Use a storyboard to outline how your information will appear on Web pages. Keep in mind that Web users are less likely to notice elements on the right side and bottom of the page, or on pages that appear cluttered. Use **text features**, such as headings and links, to organize your Web pages and to make them easy to read and navigate. Plan how you will use multimedia and where you will locate it on the page or via a link.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

**The First African-American President**

<b>Sidebar</b> <u>Contents</u> <u>Links</u> <u>Discussion</u>	<b>Introduction</b> Introduction text	
		

**PEER REVIEW** Show your **controlling idea** to another student and explain your **audience and purpose**. Discuss your evidence and how well it supports your controlling idea.



List possible topics in your *Reader/Writer Notebook*. Choose a specific topic that interests you and draft a research question. Gather your sources, synthesize the information, and draft a controlling idea. Generate a storyboard to plan your article.



**W 4** Produce clear and coherent writing. **W 8** Gather information from multiple sources and follow a standard format for citation. **W 9b (RI 1)** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis. **L 2** Demonstrate command of conventions.

## Drafting

The following chart shows a structure for outlining a **clear and coherent** online feature article.

### Organizing Your Online Feature Article

#### INTRODUCTION

- Grab your audience's attention with a **compelling quotation, question, or anecdote**.
- Supply your audience with the **background information** they need to grasp the topic.
- Use **precise language** to introduce a clear **controlling idea**, or thesis statement.
- Establish a **formal style** and an **objective tone**, or attitude.



#### BODY

- Organize information in a logical way, so that each new idea builds upon previous ideas. Include the most **significant and relevant facts, quotations, definitions, and multimedia**.
- Use appropriate **transitions** to link ideas, create cohesion, and clarify relationships.
- **Vary your syntax** instead of relying on the same words, phrases, and clauses.
- Use literary techniques, such as **metaphors, similes, and analogies**, to help your audience understand complex or abstract ideas and to add interest.
- Document the **source** of each idea. See pages 1344–1351 for information on citations.



#### CONCLUDING SECTION

- Restate your **controlling idea** and explain the significance of your topic.

### GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT: INCORPORATING QUOTATIONS

Quoting primary sources and experts increases your credibility and gives readers a broader understanding of your topic. When quoting someone else's work, cite your source both in the running text of your article and in the Works Cited section. Follow these guidelines:

- Use quotation marks at both the beginning and the end of someone else's direct words.
- Integrate short quotations into your own sentences.
- Use ellipses to indicate where you've omitted any words from the quotation.
- Enclose the author's last name and the page number of the quote in parentheses at the end of the sentence. If you've already referenced the author, include only the page number.
- Hyperlink your in-text citation to your Works Cited section.

*American historian Steven Lawson said of Obama's historic victory, "In becoming commander in chief, Obama has inherited the legacy of countless civil rights warriors who risked their lives . . . to gain the right to vote, not as an empty symbol, but as a genuine tool for freedom and equality" (2).*

See pages 1376–1377 for Modern Language Association guidelines for creating a Works Cited list.



Develop a first draft of your online feature article. Make sure to integrate quotations. Add multimedia and links to aid understanding and navigation.

# Revising

Best-selling author Michael Crichton once said, “Books aren’t written—they’re rewritten.” Revising, rewriting, and, if necessary, trying a new approach are essential to the writing process. The following chart will help you revise and rewrite where necessary.

ONLINE FEATURE ARTICLE		
Ask Yourself	Tips	Revision Strategies
1. Does my introduction grab the audience’s attention?	▶ Highlight attention-grabbing quotes, anecdotes, or facts.	▶ Add a compelling question, quotation, or anecdote to engage your audience.
2. Is my controlling idea clear and appropriate for my task, purpose, and audience?	▶ Underline your controlling idea, or thesis statement.	▶ Add a controlling idea if one is missing. Rework your existing one if it is unclear or doesn’t fit your task, purpose, or audience.
3. Is my organization logical, effective, and easy to navigate?	▶ Circle headings, links, and menu options.	▶ Group related paragraphs under boldfaced headings. Add more links to your menu to allow users to easily move to each section of your article.
4. Did I use significant and relevant evidence and multimedia to support my controlling idea?	▶ Place a check mark next to relevant evidence and multimedia that supports your controlling idea.	▶ Delete information that isn’t relevant to your controlling idea. Add additional details for any ideas that are not sufficiently supported.
5. Does my concluding section restate my controlling idea and explain my topic’s significance?	▶ Underline your restated controlling idea and explanation of the topic’s significance.	▶ Insert sentences that restate your controlling idea and explain your topic’s significance.
6. Are all of my sources correctly cited? Have I included a Works Cited section?	▶ Highlight evidence. Place a check mark next to each citation and Works Cited entry.	▶ Add in-text citations and/or Works Cited entries for any evidence that hasn’t been properly cited.



**PEER REVIEW**

Working with a partner, review your draft. Answer each question in the chart to decide how your draft can be improved. Ask: Is my use of multimedia distracting?



**W 2a–b** Include formatting, graphics, and multimedia; develop topic thoroughly by extended definitions or other information. **W 5** Develop and strengthen writing by revising, rewriting, or trying a new approach. **SL 5** Make strategic use of digital media.

## ANALYZE A STUDENT DRAFT

Read this draft; notice the comments on its strengths as well as suggestions for improvement.

### The First African-American President

by Damien F.

▼ Contents

- Introduction
- History of the Civil Rights Movement
- Barack Obama's Early Political Career
- The 2008 Campaign
- Conclusion

▼ Additional Resources

- Photos
- Speeches
- Discussion Board
- Feedback

#### Introduction

In 1863, [Abraham Lincoln](#) declared in his [Gettysburg Address](#) that all men are created equal. At the time, the [Civil War](#) raged between the South and the North. Many African Americans were enslaved, and even those who were free were denied many rights—including the right to vote. No one attending Lincoln's address could have imagined that 145 years later, an African American would be elected president of the United States.



President Obama

Barack Obama started his political career as a little known politician in Illinois, the same state that Lincoln hailed from. Before Obama won election to the U.S. Senate, only two previous African Americans had been elected as senators since Reconstruction. Four years later, he ran for president and won with 53 percent of the vote.

The work of many influential African Americans built toward this historic election. [Frederick Douglass's](#) autobiography and speeches made many Americans reevaluate their views of enslaved and free African Americans. One hundred years later, [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#), and [Malcolm X](#) worked for equality under the law for African Americans. Though they all had different philosophies and methods, their efforts and those of many other [Civil Rights](#) leaders led to monumental changes in the law and throughout society.

Next: [History of the Civil Rights Movement](#)

Damien grabs the attention of his audience with a **compelling introduction**.

Damien could add more depth to his article by providing **additional details** and **links to external sources**.

Damien uses **transitions** to create cohesion and connect ideas.

**LEARN HOW** **Link to External Sources** Damien can provide his readers with links to **authoritative** Web sites for more background information, biographies, and extended definitions. He provides sufficient links in the bottom paragraph, but not in his second paragraph. He decided to add a link to the election results.

### DAMIEN'S REVISION TO INTRODUCTION

Four years later, he ran for president and [won with 53 percent of the vote](#).

*Link to official 2008 presidential election results* ^



Use feedback from your peers and teacher as well as the “Learn How” lesson to revise or rewrite parts of your online feature article. Make sure that any links you provide are only to reliable Web sites.



## Editing and Publishing



**W 5** Strengthen writing by editing. **L 1a–b** Apply the understanding that usage is sometimes contested; resolve issues of contested usage. **L 2** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

In the editing stage, you proofread your article to eliminate errors. You also need to ensure that all of your links and multimedia elements are functioning properly. Lastly, do a final check to make sure that your pages are formatted consistently and are easy to read and navigate.

### GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT: PREPOSITIONS AND USAGE

A **preposition** is a word that relates one word to another word. Common prepositions are *at, by, for, from, in, of, on, to, and with*. Many people believe that a sentence should never end with a preposition. In some cases, it is now acceptable to end a sentence with a preposition, especially if rewording the sentence would make it awkward. However, a sentence should not end with a preposition if you could tighten up the wording and keep the same meaning.

Discuss with a partner the following example from Damien's introduction and decide which version you both think is more appropriate. If your teacher requires you to follow a particular style manual, such as *The Chicago Manual of Style*, you may use that as a reference.

#### *Damien's original sentence:*

*Barack Obama started his political career as a little known politician in Illinois, the same state that Lincoln hailed from.*

#### *Damien's revised sentence:*

*Like Lincoln, Barack Obama started his political career as a little known politician from Illinois.*

### PUBLISH YOUR WRITING

When you are finished proofreading your article, you are ready to post it online.

- Send an e-mail or text message to friends and family to notify them that your article is available for viewing.
- Post a link to your article in related forums or online communities.
- Update your status on any social media networks that you participate in to include a link to your article.
- Exchange links with classmates who have written articles on similar topics.



Carefully proofread your article and correct any errors in conventions. Be sure to check that you have used prepositions effectively. After you've completed these final touches, publish your online feature article.

# Scoring Rubric

Use the rubric below to evaluate your online feature article.

ONLINE FEATURE ARTICLE	
SCORE	COMMON CORE TRAITS
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Development</b> Effectively introduces a topic; states an insightful controlling idea; is well-developed with significant, relevant evidence; ends powerfully</li> <li>• <b>Organization</b> Organizes complex ideas to create a unified whole; uses appropriate transitions and varied syntax; effectively uses formatting and multimedia; correctly cites sources</li> <li>• <b>Language</b> Uses precise wording effectively; maintains formal style and objective tone; shows strong command of conventions</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Development</b> Competently introduces a topic; states a clear controlling idea; is well-developed with relevant evidence; ends capably</li> <li>• <b>Organization</b> Logically organizes ideas; uses transitions and varied syntax; uses formatting and multimedia; correctly cites sources</li> <li>• <b>Language</b> Uses precise language; generally maintains formal style and objective tone; makes a few errors in conventions</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Development</b> Adequately introduces a topic; states a controlling idea; includes some relevant evidence; ends adequately</li> <li>• <b>Organization</b> Is mostly well-organized; uses adequate transitions, syntax, formatting, and multimedia; cites most sources</li> <li>• <b>Language</b> Needs more precise words; mostly maintains formal style and objective tone; has some errors in conventions</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Development</b> States a controlling idea, but lacks a compelling introduction and sufficient evidence; ends with a weak concluding section</li> <li>• <b>Organization</b> Has weaknesses in organization; uses some transitions and variety of syntax; has inconsistent formatting, multimedia, and source citations</li> <li>• <b>Language</b> Sometimes uses vague language; has inconsistent style and tone; has many errors in conventions</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Development</b> Has a weak controlling idea and introduction; does not support most ideas; ends abruptly</li> <li>• <b>Organization</b> Has serious organizational flaws; often lacks transitions; lacks formatting and multimedia; rarely cites sources</li> <li>• <b>Language</b> Uses vague language; uses informal style and tone; has major errors in conventions</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Development</b> Lacks a controlling idea, supporting evidence, and a concluding section</li> <li>• <b>Organization</b> Has no organization, formatting, multimedia, or citations</li> <li>• <b>Language</b> Often uses vague language; has an inappropriate style and tone; shows no command of conventions</li> </ul>



## Technology Workshop

# Updating an Online Feature Article

Unlike an article published in a print periodical, an online feature article is always a work in progress. That's because the World Wide Web is never static; content is continually being added, updated, reorganized, or deleted to accommodate new information, new multimedia, and new ideas. As the author of an online feature article, you must regularly maintain your published work. If you want readers to consider your article a reliable source, you need to keep it updated. In this workshop, you will learn how to effectively update, improve, and enhance your online article.



Complete the workshop activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

### PRODUCE WITH A PURPOSE

#### TASK

**Update your online feature article** to replace dead links, improve design and navigation, and provide updated information on your topic.

### COMMON CORE TRAITS

#### A SUCCESSFUL UPDATE . . .

- replaces outdated information with new content from current and reliable sources
- repairs broken links
- responds promptly and respectfully to readers' questions, comments, and feedback
- modifies design or navigation features for greater ease in viewing and navigation
- promotes growth in readership by seeking new audiences and encouraging visitors to return

### COMMON CORE

**W 6** Use technology to update individual writing products in response to ongoing feedback. **SL 1c, d** Pose and respond to questions; synthesize comments; determine what additional information is required. **SL 5** Make strategic use of digital media.

## Maintaining Your Article

Frequently visit your online feature article and spend a few minutes maintaining it. Use these guidelines to help you:

- **Keep Your Links Current** Web sites often move or remove pages. For this reason, it's essential that you regularly check all of your links and make sure that the Web address, or URL, is still functional and connects to the correct information. When you locate dead or incorrect links, update them to reflect the new URL, find suitable replacement links, or delete the links from your article.
- **Respond to Feedback** Promptly read all questions and comments posted to your article. Politely reply when appropriate; delete inappropriate comments right away. Replying thoughtfully to feedback can stimulate discussion, which encourages more reader participation and return visitors.
- **Include a Last Updated Date** Provide a line of text that states the date when you last updated your article. This note shows readers how current your information is and how committed you are to keeping it up-to-date.

Media Tools

THINK  
central

Go to [thinkcentral.com](http://thinkcentral.com).  
KEYWORD: HML11N-628

## Modifying and Improving Your Article

Part of updating an online article is modifying and improving it as you receive feedback and learn more about your topic. You might modify your article for a variety of reasons, including:

- **To Improve Content** As new information about your topic becomes available, delete out-of-date information and revise your article to include the updated content, such as new links and multimedia. Make sure that any information you consider adding comes from a reliable source. If you have chosen a topic about something that changes frequently, consider adding an Updates section. Subscribing to a Web feed is a good way to stay current on your topic.
- **To Address User Feedback** Readers may offer feedback on the accuracy of your facts, your site design, or your navigational features. Before making significant changes, synthesize feedback you've received and decide what additional information or research is required. Be willing to revise your work, or even try a new approach, to address valid reader feedback.
- **To Redesign Your Web Pages** Trying a new design can give your article a more contemporary look and keep it visually appealing. You could reorganize the navigational features, add new multimedia, or try a new font. Make sure that navigation remains simple and easy for your readers.
- **To Grow Your Readership** Anytime you update or redesign your article, consider posting a status update on social media networks. Send email updates to your readers and post a link to your article on forums that your audience frequents. This way you can encourage new readers to visit and old readers to return.

### NEWS FEED

**DamienF** Check out [my updated feature article!](#) I've added a new section on Civil Rights leaders and additional information on Obama's presidency. And look for a schedule of Black History Month events, coming soon!



Regularly visit your online feature article. Check if your links are still functional and update, replace, or delete dead links. Politely and thoughtfully respond to questions, comments, and feedback. Keep your content up-to-date to engage your current readers and attract new ones.

**Bethany1** (reader) said ...

Great article, but I think you need information on Rosa Parks. BTW, do you know any events planned for Black History Month?

January 15, 7:45 AM

**Allan2** (reader) said ...

I'm not sure information on Rosa Parks would fit well with Damien's topic. It might be distracting.

January 15, 1:18 PM

**DamienF** (Site Administrator) said ...

Thanks for your feedback, Bethany and Allan! I'll do a little research and think about it. But can you tell me more about why you think Parks should/should not be included? Does anyone else have any thoughts?

January 15, 6:25 PM